

Qualitative Case Review

Southwest Region

Fiscal Year 2004

Preliminary Results

Office of Services Review

February 2004

Executive Summary

- **Southwest Region passed this review! They exceeded the exit requirements on overall Child Status, overall System Performance and on all six core indicators.**
- 24 cases were reviewed for the Southwest Region Qualitative Case Review conducted in February 2004.
- **The overall Child Status score was 95.8%, with all but one case reaching an acceptable level. This exceeds the exit requirement of 85%.**
- 100% of the cases achieved an acceptable score on Safety.
- Every child status indicator except Family Resourcefulness scored above 90%.
- Prospects for Permanency achieved an amazing score of 91.7%, meaning only two cases did not score acceptably.
- **The overall score for System Performance went from 87.5% last year to 91.7%. System Performance exceeded the exit requirement of 85% set in the Milestone Plan.**
- All but four System Performance indicators scored in the nineties and the other four scored in the eighties.
- There were only two cases that did not pass System Performance. They were both foster care cases.
- There were four workers with a caseload of more than 16 cases and two workers with less than a year of work experience. Neither large caseloads nor short employment time had an impact on the scores.
- Of the 264 System Performance indicators on the 24 cases combined, only 21 had unacceptable scores. Thirteen of these 21 scores were on the same two cases. There were no scores of 1 found on any of the individual System Performance indicators, and only five 2's. An analysis of the overall scores on the cases further illustrates Southwest Region's outstanding performance. Twenty of the twenty-four cases (83%) had an overall Child Status score of 5 or 6. This compares to 14 cases in 2003 and 7 cases in FY02. Remarkably, two-thirds of the cases (16) had an overall System Performance score of 5 or 6.
- Focus groups reported excellent partnering and the implementation of effective new groups such as the Resource Development Team. They were proud of what the region has accomplished and confident that outcomes would keep getting even better.
- Workers report an excellent level of support from management and an effective mentoring process. Workers have adopted the Practice Model principles as an integral part of conducting their daily business.

Methodology

The Qualitative Case Review was held the week of February 9-13, 2004. Twenty-four open DCFS cases in the Southwest Region were selected and scored. The cases were reviewed by certified reviewers from the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group (CWPPG), the Office of Services Review (OSR), and the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), as well as by first time reviewers from DCFS and outside stakeholders. The cases were selected by CWPPG based on a sampling matrix assuring that a representative group of children were reviewed. The sample included children in out-of-home care and families receiving home-based services such as voluntary and protective supervision and intensive family preservation. Cases were selected to include offices throughout the region.

The information was obtained through in-depth interviews with the children (if old enough to participate), their parents or other guardians, foster parents (when placed in foster care), caseworkers, teachers, therapists, service providers and others having a significant role in the child's life. In addition the children's files, including prior CPS investigations and other available records, were reviewed.

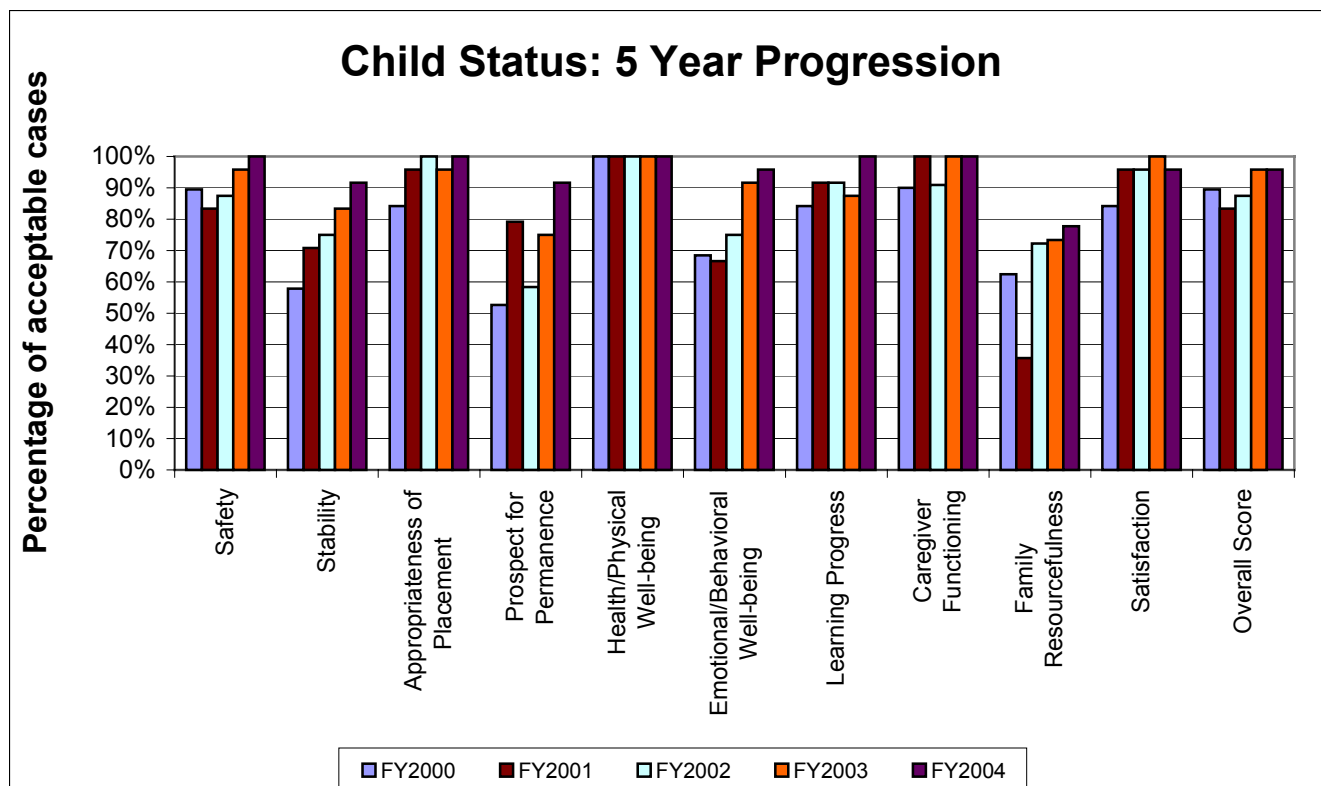
Performance Tables: Child Status

The results in the following tables are based on the scores provided to OSR. They contain the scores of 24 cases. These results are preliminary only and are subject to change.

Southwest Child Status										
		# of cases				FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04
	# of cases	Needing			Baseline					Current
	Acceptable	Improvement	Exit Criteria	85% on overall score	Scores					Scores
Safety	24	0		100.0%	89.5%	83.3%	87.5%	95.8%	100.0%	
Stability	22	2		91.7%	57.9%	70.8%	75.0%	83.3%	91.7%	
Appropriateness of Placement	24	0		100.0%	84.2%	95.8%	100.0%	95.8%	100.0%	
Prospect for Permanence	22	2		91.7%	52.6%	79.2%	58.3%	75.0%	91.7%	
Health/Physical Well-being	24	0		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Emotional/Behavioral Well-being	23	1		95.8%	68.4%	66.7%	75.0%	91.7%	95.8%	
Learning Progress	24	0		100.0%	84.2%	91.7%	91.7%	87.5%	100.0%	
Caregiver Functioning	15	0		100.0%	90.0%	100.0%	90.9%	100.0%	100.0%	
Family Resourcefulness	14	4		77.8%	62.5%	35.7%	72.2%	73.3%	77.8%	
Satisfaction	23	1		95.8%	84.2%	95.8%	95.8%	100.0%	95.8%	
Overall Score	23	1		95.8%	89.5%	83.3%	87.5%	95.8%	95.8%	1)

1) This score reflects the percent of cases that had an overall acceptable Child Status score. It is not an average of FY04 current scores.

Note: these scores are preliminary and subject to change.



Statistical Analysis of Child Status Results:

The overall Child Status score was 95.8%, with all but one case reaching an acceptable level. This meets the exit requirement of 85% and maintains last year's score of 95.8%.

Safety achieved a score of 100%, meaning there were no cases with safety concerns.

Most impressive is that only one indicator scored below 90%. This one indicator was Family Functioning, which scored 77.8%. Five of the indicators (Safety, Appropriateness of Placement, Health/Physical Well-being, Learning Progress and Caregiver Functioning) scored 100%. Emotional/Behavioral Well-being, and Satisfaction scored just slightly lower at 95.8%. Stability and Prospects for Permanence scored 91.7%.

An analysis of the overall scores on the individual cases supports Southwest Region's remarkable performance. Twenty of the twenty-four cases (83%) had an overall Child Status score of 5 or 6. This compares to 14 cases in 2003 and 7 cases in FY02.

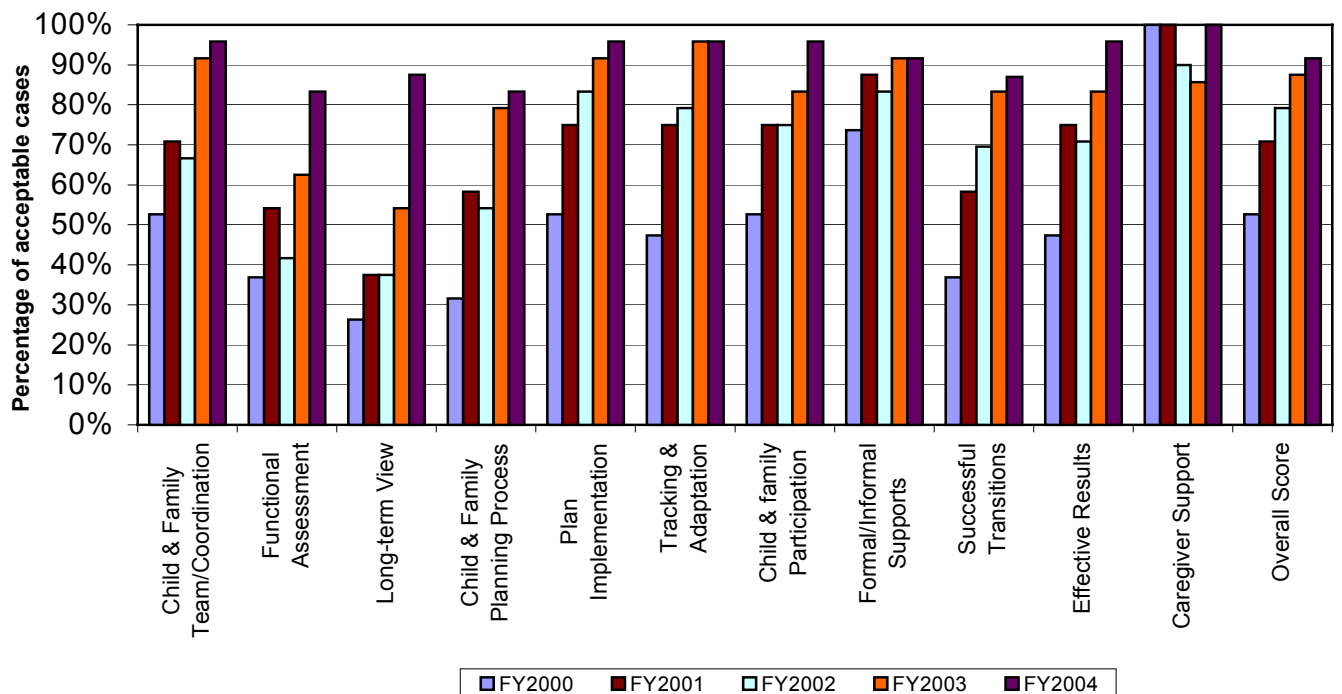
Performance Tables: System Performance

Southwest System Performance										
		# of cases				FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04
	# of cases	Needing	Exit Criteria 70% on	Shaded indicators	Baseline					Current
	Acceptable	Improvement	Exit Criteria 85% on	overall score	Scores					Scores
Child & Family Team/Coordination	23	1	<div><div></div></div>	95.8%	52.6%	70.8%	66.7%	91.7%		95.8%
Functional Assessment	20	4	<div><div></div></div>	83.3%	36.8%	54.2%	41.7%	62.5%		83.3%
Long-term View	21	3	<div><div></div></div>	87.5%	26.3%	37.5%	37.5%	54.2%		87.5%
Child & Family Planning Process	20	4	<div><div></div></div>	83.3%	31.6%	58.3%	54.2%	79.2%		83.3%
Plan Implementation	23	1	<div><div></div></div>	95.8%	52.6%	75.0%	83.3%	91.7%		95.8%
Tracking & Adaptation	23	1	<div><div></div></div>	95.8%	47.4%	75.0%	79.2%	95.8%		95.8%
Child & family Participation	23	1	<div><div></div></div>	95.8%	52.6%	75.0%	75.0%	83.3%		95.8%
Formal/Informal Supports	22	2	<div><div></div></div>	91.7%	73.7%	87.5%	83.3%	91.7%		91.7%
Successful Transitions	20	3	<div><div></div></div>	87.0%	36.8%	58.3%	69.6%	83.3%		87.0%
Effective Results	23	1	<div><div></div></div>	95.8%	47.4%	75.0%	70.8%	83.3%		95.8%
Caregiver Support	14	0	<div><div></div></div>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	90.0%	86.7%		100.0%
Overall Score	22	2	<div><div></div></div>	91.7%	52.6%	70.8%	79.2%	87.5%		91.7%

1) This score reflects the percent of cases that had an overall acceptable System Performance score. It is not an average of FY04 current scores.

Note: these scores are preliminary and subject to change.

System Performance: 5 Year Progression



Statistical Analysis of System Performance Results:

The overall score for System Performance went from 87.5% last year to 91.7% this year and exceeds the exit requirement of 85% set in the Milestone Plan.

All of the System Performance indicators scored high, the lowest scores being Functional Assessment and Child and Family Planning Process, each at 83.3%. Long-term View and Successful Transitions scored 87%. The other system performance indicators all scored in the nineties, with the exception of Caregiver Support which scored 100%. Remarkable results were obtained on all of the core indicators: Child and Family Team and Coordination (95.8%), Functional Assessment (83.3%), Long-term View (87.5%), Child and Family Planning Process (83.3%), Plan Implementation (95.8%), and Tracking and Adaptation (95.8%). The core indicators that trailed last year, Functional Assessment and Long-term View, each showed tremendous improvement. They were up 20.8 and 33.3 percentage points, respectively. Every core indicator substantially exceeded the exit criteria of 70%.

An analysis of the overall scores on the individual cases supports Southwest Region's remarkable performance. Sixteen of the twenty-four cases (67%) had an overall Child Status score of 5 or 6.

There were only two cases that had unacceptable overall scores on System Performance. Each of these cases had an overall score of 3.

There were only 21 unacceptable scores given on individual System Performance indicators on all 24 cases combined. Thirteen of these 21 were on the same two cases. The other eight unacceptable scores were spread over six different cases. There were no scores of 1 found on any of the individual System Performance indicators, and only five 2's. All five of these 2's came on the same two cases mentioned above. Sixteen of the cases (66.6%) had acceptable scores on every System Performance indicator.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Since only two cases obtained unacceptable results on Overall System Performance and only one case on Overall Child Status (that one case was the same as one that had unacceptable results on System Performance), the analysis of the results by case types, target child, and caseworker has little relevance. That's why, in some instances, OSR looked at the average of the scores achieved for each category of results.

RESULTS BY CASE TYPE AND PERMANENCY GOALS

The 24 cases reviewed were divided evenly between foster care cases and in-home cases. Both of the cases that scored unacceptably on System Performance were foster care cases; therefore, in-home cases scored better than foster care cases. All 12 of the in-home cases (100%) had acceptable overall System Performance while 10 of the 12 foster care cases scored acceptably (83.3%). These cases both had unacceptable scores in Functional Assessment, Long-term View, and Planning.

There were only two voluntary cases (PSC) in the sample and they both had overall System Performance scores that were acceptable.

Case Type	# in sample	# Acceptable System Performance	% Acceptable System Performance	Average Overall System Perform. Score
Foster Care	12	10	83.3%	5.1
Home-based	12	12	100%	4.6

Of the two foster care cases that did not pass, one had a goal of Return Home and the other had the goal of Adoption.

Goal	# in sample	# Acceptable System Performance	% Acceptable System Performance	Average Overall System Perform. Score
Adoption	2	1	50%	4.5
Independent Living	2	2	100%	6
Guardianship	2	2	100%	5
Individualized Perm	1	1	100%	6
Remain Home	8	8	100%	4.5
Return Home	9	8	88.9%	4.9

RESULTS BY AGE OF TARGET CHILD

There was only one case that did not pass Child Status, and this was the case of a teenager. This case did not pass on System Performance either. The other case that did not pass System Performance was a small child.

RESULTS BY CASEWORKER DEMOGRAPHICS

Large caseloads didn't seem to have an impact on the results. The one case that didn't pass either Child Status or System Performance was from a worker with a low caseload (13). The case that didn't pass System Performance was from a worker with a high caseload (19). There were four workers with a caseload of more than 16 cases, and these workers had caseloads of 17, 18, 19, and 22. Last year there were only three workers who had more than 16 cases, and no worker had more than 18 cases. It appears caseloads may be creeping upward.

Of the 24 caseworkers who provided information about employment length, only two were new workers with less than a year work experience. All others have been working for DCFS for more than a year. This represents a very low turnover rate. The two cases that scored unacceptably were from experienced workers. The cases of the two new workers both passed.

RESULTS BY OFFICES AND SUPERVISORS

The following table displays the overall case results by office and supervisor. Again, because only two cases had lower than expected results, it is not possible to draw conclusions based on offices or supervisors. The case that did not pass System Performance was from the St. George office, and the ten other cases from that office passed. The case that did not pass either Child Status or System Performance was from the Manti office, and the two other cases from that office passed.

The results by supervisor show that no supervisor had more than one case score unacceptably, and most supervisors had every case score acceptably.

Case #	Office	Supervisor	Child Status	System Performance	Sys. Perf. By Office	Sys. Perf. By Supervisor	
04SW09	B	Destry Maycock	Acceptable	Acceptable	2 Acceptable	Destry Maycock	2 Acceptable
04SW16	B	Todd Minchey	Acceptable	Acceptable			0 Unacceptable
					100%		100%
04SW08	C	Don Anderson	Acceptable	Acceptable	3 Acceptable	Todd Minchey	2 Acceptable
04SW18	C	Don Anderson	Acceptable	Acceptable			0 Unacceptable
04SW19	C	Don Anderson	Acceptable	Acceptable	100%		100%
04SW12	K	Destry Maycock	Acceptable	Acceptable	2 Acceptable	Don Anderson	3 Acceptable
04SW23	K	Todd Minchey	Acceptable	Acceptable			0 Unacceptable
					100%		100%
04SW04	M	Valorie Johnson	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	2 Acceptable	Valorie Johnson	2 Acceptable
04SW13	M	Valorie Johnson	Acceptable	Acceptable	1 Unacceptable		1 Unacceptable
04SW22	M	Valorie Johnson	Acceptable	Acceptable	67%		67%
04SW01	R	Bruce Zylks	Acceptable	Acceptable	3 Acceptable	Bruce Zylks	3 Acceptable
04SW11	R	Bruce Zylks	Acceptable	Acceptable			0 Unacceptable
04SW14	R	Bruce Zylks	Acceptable	Acceptable	100%		100%
04SW02	S	Robert Johnson	Acceptable	Acceptable	10 Acceptable	Robert Johnson	8 Acceptable
04SW03	S	Robert Johnson	Acceptable	Unacceptable	1 Unacceptable		1 Unacceptable
04SW05	S	Robert Johnson	Acceptable	Acceptable	91%		89%
04SW06	S	Robert Johnson	Acceptable	Acceptable		Ted Walker	2 Acceptable
04SW07	S	Robert Johnson	Acceptable	Acceptable			0 Unacceptable
04SW10	S	Robert Johnson	Acceptable	Acceptable			100%
04SW20	S	Robert Johnson	Acceptable	Acceptable			
04SW21	S	Robert Johnson	Acceptable	Acceptable			
04SW24	S	Robert Johnson	Acceptable	Acceptable			
04SW15	S	Ted Walker	Acceptable	Acceptable			
04SW17	S	Ted Walker	Acceptable	Acceptable			

Summary of Interviews with Focus Groups Southwest Region QCR FY2004

Six focus groups were conducted in conjunction with this review: The Resource Development Team, Cedar City Staff, DCFS Supervisors, DCFS Region Management Team, Foster Parents, and New Caseworkers. Summaries of all six focus group meetings are included below. The focus groups were conducted by Linda Bayless of the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group.

Resource Development Team Focus Group

Strengths:

- Doing a good job finding resources as close to the community of origin as possible.
- Using flexible funds to fund youth advocates.
- Offices do very well with being creative.
- Local supervisors can approve use of creative funds up to \$100.
- DCFS is more involved with partners and partners are coming on board.
- Partners are calling Family Team Meetings.
- Money is not a big issue because partners are splitting expenses.
- There is more accountability because partners are working together.
- Families feel DCFS is truly invested in their success.
- The Resource Development Team has never had a request that they couldn't meet.
- DCFS is presenting plans and partners are working with DCFS to make the plans work.
- Workers feel supported because they get responses to their requests quickly.
- Workers know how to ask for what they need for their families. Every worker has been through creative intervention training.
- Workers know there is a team to help them find solutions.
- Use of creative intervention funding has helped make up for the loss of FACT and LIC funding in the Richfield area.
- Schools have come on board because of the loss of the FACT program.
- Camaraderie among partners has increased since the loss of the FACT program.
- Mental health is working with drug education in addition to drug treatment.
- The relationship with Central Utah Counseling has improved and DCFS is getting the help they need.
- Central Utah Counseling has changed their thinking and now focuses on families rather than individuals.
- Central Utah Counseling is now willing to match therapists to families.
- The Utah Frontiers Project has been helpful.
- The Hurricane Valley Family Support Center has been helpful.
- Partners say what DCFS is doing for families is working.

- Emancipated youth are working as mentors for youth in the Independent Living Program.
- The Quality Improvement Committee is running well and saying good things about DCFS.

Barriers:

- DCFS has to spend money for court ordered assessments. Judges order treatment that DCFS has to pay for.
- There is a need for treatment for eating disorders.
- Loss of FACT and LIC funding is affecting the Manti area.
- Dependency drug court issues need to be addressed in the rest of the region like they have been in St. George.
- DCFS is ordered to do drug testing, but doesn't have the funding for it.
- Drug use takes away from the voluntary aspect of cases because it makes it a court issue.
- An explosion of drug usage in the community has outrun region resources.
- A Family Support Center is needed in Richfield.
- More therapeutic foster homes are needed so kids can be kept closer to their homes in rural areas.
- Kids with mental disabilities who are aging out of the system don't really fit anywhere.

Cedar City Staff Focus Group

Strengths:

- The Practice Model is “working its magic.”
- Workers have all had Practice Model training and are now refining their practice.
- When one worker succeeds, others want to follow the Practice Model.
- Having the Functional Assessment on SAFE is helpful.
- Partnerships have come a long way.
- The Cedar City office meshes well together and they are a tight-knit group.
- Communication between teams within the office is wonderful.
- There is good transfer of information from CPS to the other teams.
- The CPS team feels like their supervisor is very supportive.
- Child and Family Team Meetings are happening for virtually all families.
- Team meetings are helping families realize how much support they have.
- Assessment is the backbone of their cases.
- They have found that families can be easily engaged when you ask them how they feel.
- Administration is committed to the Practice Model and to families.
- Administration is committed to the workers as individuals and provides support on both work and personal issues.
- Child and Family Team minutes have been a benefit and have helped hold team members accountable for assignments.
- The Healthy Utah exercise program has been very positive and provides a break for workers.
- The Director of DCFS has worked hard to educate and involve legislators.
- Law enforcement has been a wonderful partner.

Barriers:

- They need fixes to SAFE now but some of those fixes are still two or three years away.
- There is a need for more families that want to become foster parents.
- A drug court is needed in Iron County.
- Engagement with families is hampered by workers having to do drug testing.
- CPS referrals have increased dramatically so more CPS workers are needed.
- CPS workers feel they can’t do anything but crisis management right now.
- Court ordered and dependency cases have increased.
- Insurance costs have risen while pay has not, so workers are taking home less.
- Committees are established but they do not have the time or resources to meet.
- Incentives are needed. Workers need more than a pat on the back.
- Access to more state cars would be beneficial.
- Media coverage includes only negative cases, not successes.
- Legislators are “down on” caseworkers and don’t know what workers really do.

Supervisor Focus Group

Strengths:

- The mentoring program has been working well and has been a huge support.
- Central Utah Counseling Center is working better with DCFS.
- DCFS has a working agreement with Central Utah Counseling that says they will attend all Child and Family Team Meetings.
- The region has made impressive efforts to develop flexible funding.
- Workers feel supported by the Resource Development Team.
- Approval on flexible funding requests has been received very quickly.
- The region does a good job of pulling all funding pools together to help families.
- Partners are asking that additional Child and Family Team Meetings be held.
- New employees like what they do and feel supported.
- There is a general feeling of being supported and trusted.
- New workers like their mentors and all rated them as 11's on a scale of 1 to 10.

Barriers:

- Workers who are mentoring have full workloads, and mentoring is an additional hidden workload.
- Develop a pool of workers so when there is a vacancy someone would be ready to fill it.
- Practice Model needs to be implemented by other agencies such as Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Courts, Youth Corrections, DSPD, etc.
- Having a therapist on staff with DCFS would be ideal.
- It is difficult to find a mental health provider who does family therapy.
- Youth Corrections needs training on how to intervene to keep kids from coming into care with DCFS.
- There has been a significant increase in CPS intake due to an increase in domestic violence and drug use.
- There is a need for more foster parents.
- Directors of agencies other than DCFS need to develop plans to deal with system barriers that affect DCFS.
- It takes two years for a worker to learn their job, and then they leave for a higher paying job in another agency.
- There is no support for raises or incentives.
- The functional assessment needs to be imported to the plan in SAFE.
- Workers do not like doing drug screenings and don't want to do them at all.
- Drug court is needed.
- Pay raises for new workers has created inequities for old workers.

Region Management Team Focus Group

Strengths:

- Southwest Region established a Big Action Plan.
- Southwest Region is staying the course in spite of legislative changes.
- Southwest Region established a system of ongoing evaluation and generation on data within the region.
- Practice has definitely improved.
- Southwest Region is constantly looking at ways to do things even better.
- Federal review results used to help change practice for the better.
- Regular review of data during management team meetings.
- Workers are focused on the Practice Model.
- Practice Model training is provided to foster parents.
- Foster parent training has improved. Foster parents understand what workers are doing.
- Foster parents feel involved and understand why teaming is important.
- Clients see the system being less abrasive than in the past.
- Exit surveys provide good feedback on why workers are leaving.
- Turnover rate is less than 5%.
- There is an emphasis on teaming and families feel that they own the team.
- Families have been empowered to help themselves.
- The structure of the region is a strength.
- Permanency, Planning, and Placement committee focuses on high cost kids.
- Contracted providers are providing progress reports.
- DCFS verifies that providers are giving children and families what they have been contracted to provide.
- The Resource Development Team has taken the time to teach workers how to get the support they need.
- Tom, Lori, and Cathy provide support on specific cases.
- Sprint Team meets regularly to improve practice and analyze data.
- Practice Model has helped all players know the direction of the plans.
- Foster Parents are now aware that they can call a Child and Family Team meeting.
- Foster parents feel they are listened to.
- Crossfeeding within the region is very good.
- The Office of Licensing, Foster Care Foundation, and DCFS meet monthly to track families through recruitment and licensing.
- DCFS worked with Licensing to eliminate a backlog of home studies.
- Focus is on foster parent retention, not just recruitment.
- Last quarter no foster parent left due to lack of support from DCFS.
- Cluster groups are in place for foster parents.
- A performance based contract is in place with the Utah Foster Care Foundation.

- A support system has been created to make up for the lack of Resource Family Consultants.
- The Quality Improvement Committee has been a great resource for DCFS.
- Trainers developed a Practice Model refresher training module.
- Pre-Child and Family Team Meetings are held to see what families want to address at team meetings.
- Many Child and Family Team Meetings are held in the homes of parents.
- A Long-Term View worksheet has been developed.
- The relationship with Central Utah Counseling has improved.
- More therapeutic foster homes are being developed.
- Clinical Consultant is evaluating the assessments from providers to determine each provider's strengths.
- The focus of the region is on process, not paperwork.
- A quick reference guide of the Practice Model was developed and given to workers.
- Outcome measures show families are more satisfied and kids are safer.
- Support staffers are relieving workers by taking minutes at meetings.
- Workers are more aware of family issues now.
- Each case is dealt with individually.
- The region has an attitude of openness.
- Functional assessments are excellent and hold the cases together.

Barriers:

- Lack of response from legislator in spite of dozens of attempted contacts.

Foster Parent Focus Group

Strengths:

- DCFS does more for families before they remove kids.
- Foster parents are invited to team meetings and they help create the service plans.
- DCFS is good about paying for things like lessons and gymnastics.
- Caseworkers are very accessible and willing to help.
- Caseworkers respect foster parents and their ideas.
- Foster Friends provide support such as helping with transportation.
- DCFS makes foster parents feel very valued.
- CPS workers in St. George are wonderful and provide lots of information prior to placement.
- St. George CPS workers don't minimize problems and always do 24-hour visits after placement.
- Shelter parents have a lot of input in choosing foster homes.
- Training provided to foster parents is much better now.
- Utah Foster Care Foundation plans to provide more training through the cluster groups.
- Southwest Counseling meets regularly with the DCFS Supervisor in Cedar City.

Barriers:

- Foster parents would like more training on how to find things that will motivate individual kids.
- Caseworkers need to be retained so they will stay longer with the agency.
- Police and probation officers should be involved in teaming.
- Communication between workers and foster parents could be better.
- Some caseworkers don't share information with foster parents because they think it will be a violation of confidentiality.
- More Foster Friends are needed.
- More shelter homes are needed. Many people don't like to be shelter homes because children are removed so quickly.
- Foster Parents don't like the Family Support Center and don't feel comfortable having children there. They would prefer children be placed in shelter homes.
- Sometimes foster parents are told not to attend team meetings because the biological parents will be there.
- Requiring that foster children be left with only licensed baby sitters makes it difficult for foster parents to get time alone as a couple because they can't find a licensed sitter.
- Sometimes children need a higher level of care but DCFS won't raise the level of care because they aren't willing to pay the increase.

New Caseworker Focus Group

Strengths:

- Mentors want new workers to succeed.
- Entire staff cares about the children and families they work with.
- The region is willing to do whatever needs to be done.
- Mentors trust them with responsibility and teach them how to succeed.
- The entire DCFS team supports new workers.
- Practice Model training is excellent and it's making a difference.
- Workers are learning to provide individualized services.
- New workers have all the skills and tools that they need.
- Workers feel supported by DCFS Region Administration.
- Supervisors trust the new workers and have confidence in them.
- There is a commitment to training and mentoring on the regional level.
- Supervisors are protective and supportive of new workers.
- The support staff is incredible. They are very bright and motivated.
- Mentors make new workers aware of services and resources.
- The region is working hard to develop more community resources.
- The Qualitative Case Review and Case Process Review are helpful.

Barriers:

- The AG's are excellent attorneys, but working with them can be challenging.
- Workers need training in accessing additional resources.
- Additional space is needed to hold Child and Family Team meetings, visits, etc.
- Lengthening priority time frames for certain CPS cases would be great.
- CPS workers would like more time to help families adjust from CPS to in-home services.
- Accessing police reports is a very slow process.
- Support staff are needed to transport kid to visits, etc.
- Administration and trainers could be kept in touch with workers by assigning each administrator and trainer as a primary worker on one case.
- Better quality foster homes are needed.
- Youth Services has been taken back by DYC, so DCFS gets a lot of dependency cases.
- More emphasis on developing partnerships in the rural communities is needed.
- Most of the region has no Family Support Center or Children's Justice Center.
- CORE and Practice Model training need to be integrated.
- The Functional Assessment and Service Plan aren't linked in SAFE.
- Family Team Meetings need to last longer so workers have time to collect all the information they need.

Qualitative Case Review: Exit Conference

February 2004

Strengths:

- Real engagement of the families.
- Use and development of the mentoring program, the learning environment, and improved and timely training.
- Meaningful partnership with the schools.
- Individualized Plans coming from the functional assessments that are developed at the team meetings.
- Organized and systematic way to approach Long Term View and Functional Assessment, Tools have been developed.
- All team members could identify all of the partners.
- Tracking the services and adaptation of the plan.
- Attention to not overwhelming the family with requirements. Requirements are done in a realistic order and choices of services are offered.
- Use of flexible funding in a timely manner, and a committee that responds to needs.
- Drug Court is well informed of the permanency time frames.
- Supervisors and managers are fully utilizing the Practice Model.
- There has been full development of the Practice Model, especially in teaming.
- Good inclusion of distant team members.
- Reinvolvement of PD'd parent informally into the team. Ability to think outside the norms to bring about best practice.
- Using the review process to learn.
- Workers persist with the practice model even with resistant families.
- Strong advocacy for in-home and community based services.
- Partners are volunteering ways to improve the partnership.
- Partners are seeing the value of the process and adapting it for their own needs.
- "How good is this case" is the focus now instead of acceptable vs. unacceptable.
- The region has ownership of the Practice Model.
- Team meetings are used at critical junctures rather than just at the mandated points.

- Use of teams at early points in the case.
- Communication developed throughout the team and not just through the worker.
- Uniform praise for workers from partners and the families.
- Most young children are placed in legal risk homes at the beginning, minimizing moves.
- Workers are willing to take a reasonable risk to give the family a chance with creative interventions.
- State has increased the number of Health Care Nurses, resulting in health issues being tracked in a timely manner.
- Great foster parents who see themselves as partners.

Refinement Opportunities

- Increase emphasis on “cross feeding.”
- Increase child’s involvement with the team when children are placed out of the area where the team is.
- Try to insure that all significant individuals are part of the Functional Assessment and that all relationships are thoroughly examined.
- Remove artificial barriers on the time length of team meetings.
- Improve preparation for team meetings.
- Increase the family ownership of the team meeting.
- Examine formal assessments to assure they are adequate.
- Continue concurrent planning toward permanency while ICWA placements are still being developed.
- Pay more attention to transitional planning, especially when it involves the safety of the child.
- Engagement being shifted to the partners
- Encourage team ownership of the LTV and develop steps to achieve the LTV. Determine how to resolve disagreements in the intermediate steps.
- Focus LTV beyond DCFS involvement.
- Enhance worker knowledge of community resources.

System Barriers

- Limited availability of resources in the rural areas is providing few choices.
- Lack of flexibility and latitude in working with Office of Recovery Services.
- Lack of tracking that would allow resources to be matched to areas of need.
- Rules prevent availability of services.
- Limited availability of psychiatric services.
- Ongoing need for well-trained foster homes.
- Work to improve the procedures when working with ICWA cases.
- Cross system issues with courtesy workers in other regions.
- Better compensation and incentives to retain workers.
- Greater effort at the State and Federal levels to find resolutions to systemic barriers between the agencies.
- Community outreach and public relations.
- Lack of funding to develop enhancements needed in SAFE.
- Need for individualized incentive awards for the workers who work hard.
- Availability of inpatient beds.
- Drug testing by the workers is hampering the ability to engage.